

Andrew Jackson to James Monroe, November 15, 1818, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

1 Copy. The first two paragraphs of this letter are printed in *Niles' Register* , XL. 22, and in Parton's Jackson, II. 525.

Hermitage, November 15, 1818.

D'r Sir, On my return from the Chickasaw treaty I found it necessary to pass by Milton's Bluffs, where I had established some hands for the culture of cotton, hearing it had been laid out for a town and the lotts sold, to have as much of my crop preserved, as existing circumstances would permit.

From thence I took Huntsville in my rout and did not reach the Hermitage until the 12th Instant, and on the 13th recd. your letter of the 20th Ultimo, 2 from an attentive perusal of which I have concluded that you have not yet seen my dispatches from Ft. Gadsdone of the 5th of May last, which is reported to have reached the Department of War, by due course of mail, and owing to the negligence or inexperience of the clerks, was thrown aside as a bundle of Revolutionary and Pension claims. This I sincerely regret as it would have brought to your view, the light in which I recived my orders. The closing paragraph of that dispatch is in the following words—"I trust, therefore, that the measures which have been persued will meet with the approbation of the President of the U. States. They have been adopted in persuance of your instructions under a firm conviction, that they alone were calculated to insure peace and security to the Southern frontier of Georgia." The moment therefore, that you assume the ground that I transcended my powers, the letter above referred to, will at once shew the view I had taken of them, and make manifest the differences of opinion that exist. Indeed there is no data, at present, upon which such a

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letter as you wish written to the Secretary of war, can be bottomed. I have no ground to believe that a difference of opinion existed between the Government and myself relative to the powers given to me in my orders, unless I advert to your private and confidential letter, or the public prints, neither of which can be made the basis of an official communication to the

2 See vol. II., p. 398.

Secretary of war. Had I ever, or were I now to receive an official letter from the Secretary of War explanatory of the light in which my orders were viewed by the Government, I would, with pleasure give my view of them.

Permit me to remark that I am well advised of the liberal and honorable sentiments of Mr. Calhoun. I confide fully in them; and be assured that, on my part, nothing inconsistent with the pure principles of honor and friendship will be done, calculated either to wound the feelings, or injure the standing of Mr. Calhoun or yourself with the nation. Should circumstances make it necessary for me to enter into a defence of my conduct on the Seminole campaign, it shall be bottomed upon the principles of truth and honor, and any thing extraneous, or impertinent, sedulously avoided. At the same time, however, that I am convinced of the honorable and liberal sentiments of Mr. Calhoun, I am not insensible of the inveterate hostility of Mr. Crawford towards me; nor have I any doubt of his hostility towards you, as I am lately confidentially informed that a letter from him to Mr. Clay has been seen proposing a coalition of interest again[s]t your next election. As for any thing he can do, as it regards myself, I am perfectly shielded. I have for many years viewed him as a base unprincipled man, have thus wrote him, and every day brings with it fresh proof that I have put a just estimate upon his character.

Indeed I should not be surprised to learn that the intrigues of Mr. Crawford, Mr. Calhoun being absent at the time, occasioned my dispatches of the 5th of May from fort Gadsdone to be thrown aside as old papers, that they might not be seen until a determination, respecting the Floridas, should be made by the Executive. In this he would have had a

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double object—to injure both you and myself, in the estimation of our country; and to have accomplished an object so desirable to himself and his colleagues, the injury nay the ruin of his country would have interposed no barrier.

If you will have a letter written to me relative to the extent of my powers, as suggested in your letter now before me, ³ I will answer it as fully and as promptly as the nature of the case will admit of and in the mean time believe me to be my dear Sir, with respect and sincere regard your Obt. Humble Svt.

³ See Monroe to Jackson, Dec. 21, in vol. II., p. 404.